Kornei Chukovsky

LITTLE FLY SO SPRIGHTLY

Books Donated by:
Mrs. Purwa Bharadwaj and Mrs. Anupama Jha

Malysh Publishers Moscow 1981

Little Fly so spruce and sprightly,
Golden tummy shining brightly,

Right across the field she flew,
Spied a penny. It was new.

So she searched the town bazaar.
There she bought a samovar.

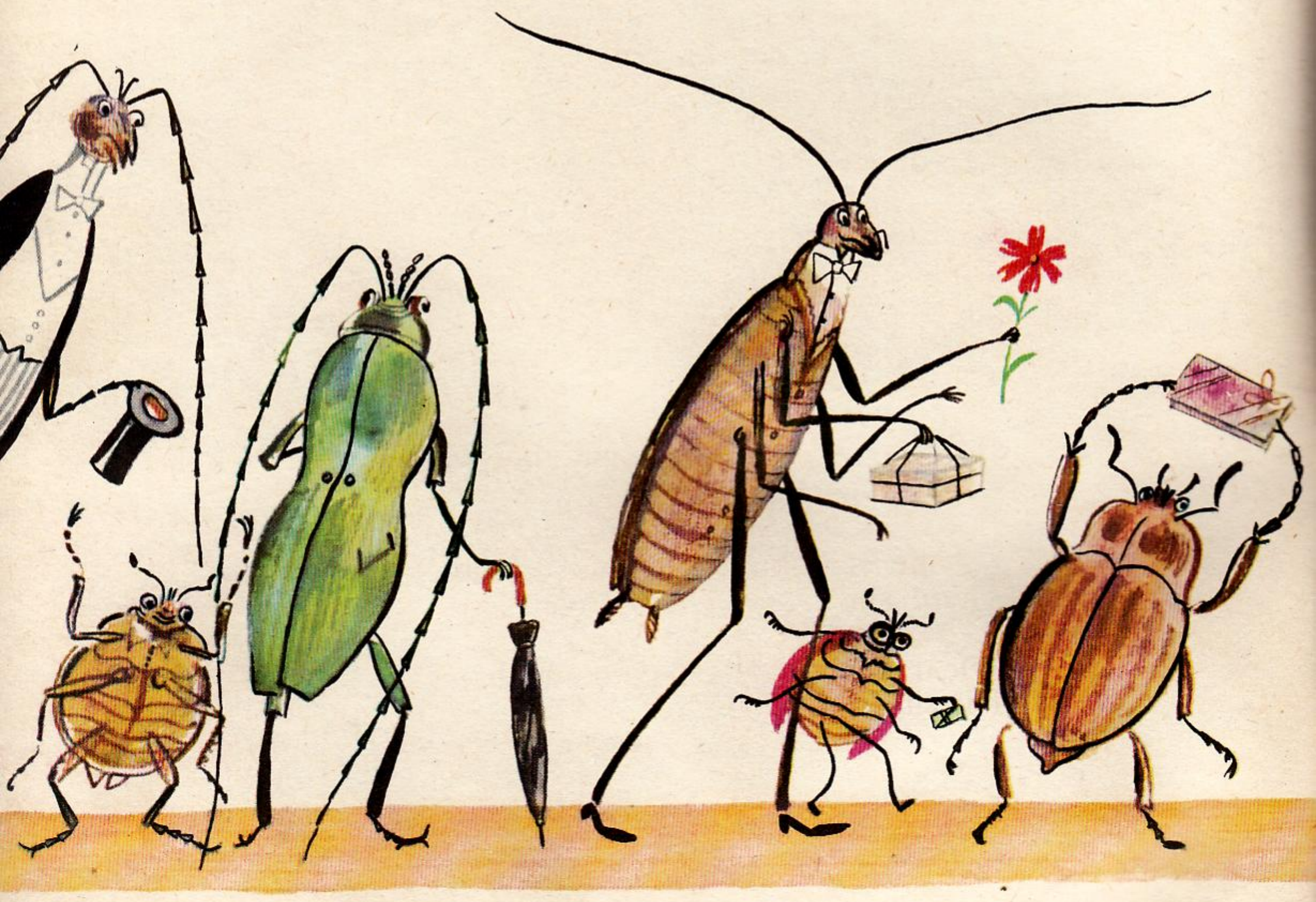
"Dear Cockroaches, come with me.
I invite you all to tea."

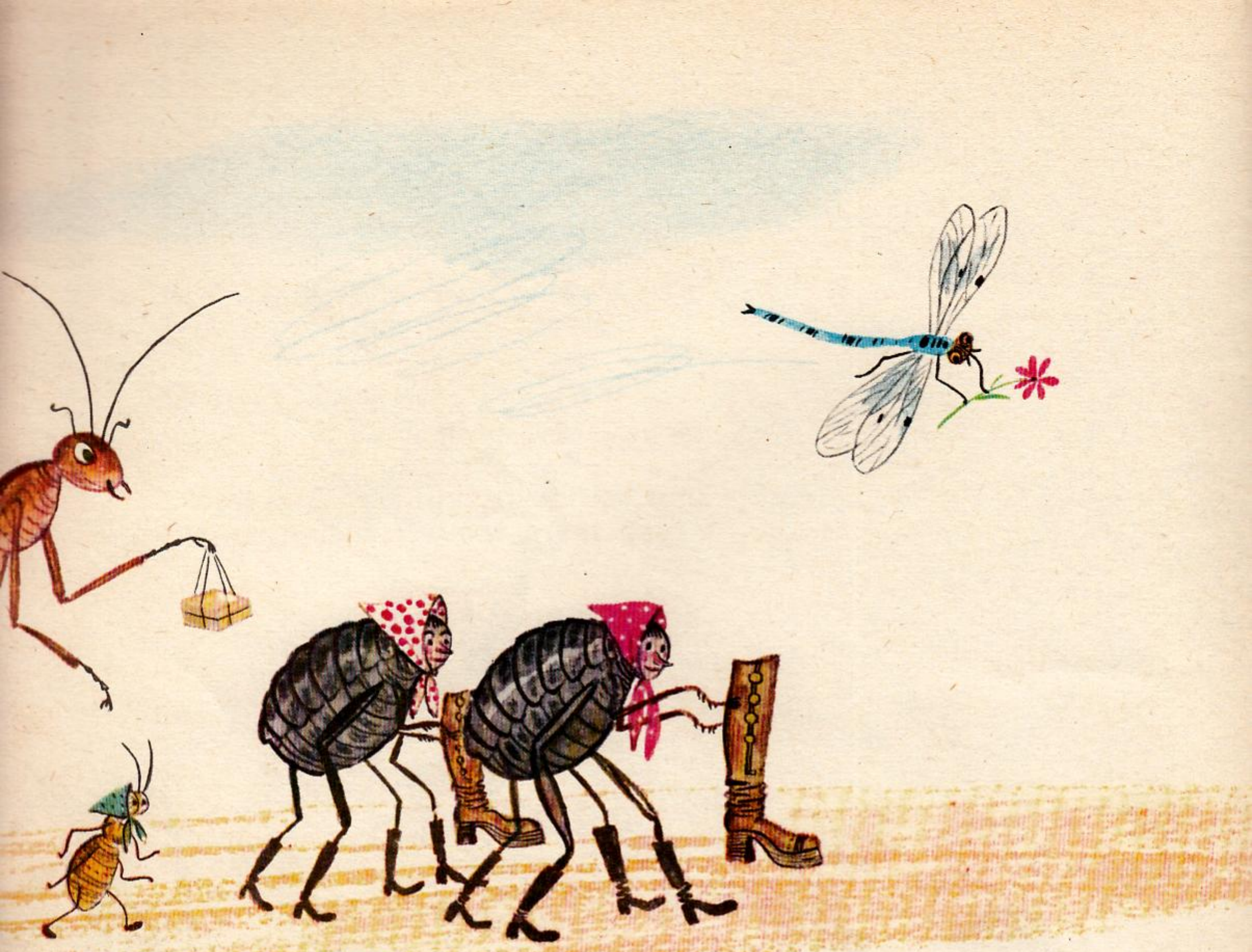
To the Fly Cockroaches scurried.
From the floor to tea they hurried.

Grubs from grasses
Drank three glasses.

Ladybugs
Had milk in jugs.

Little Fly so spruce and sprightly,
This is your great day!





She was given boots by fleas.
Such a gift was bound to please,
For in shops are rarely sold
Boots with buckles made of gold.

Granny Bee quite rightly,
Gave what was her own
To our Fly so sprightly—
Honey from the comb...

"Lovely Moth, sweet Butterfly,
Pretty ones, please eat.
On your bread and butter try
Honey. It's a treat!"

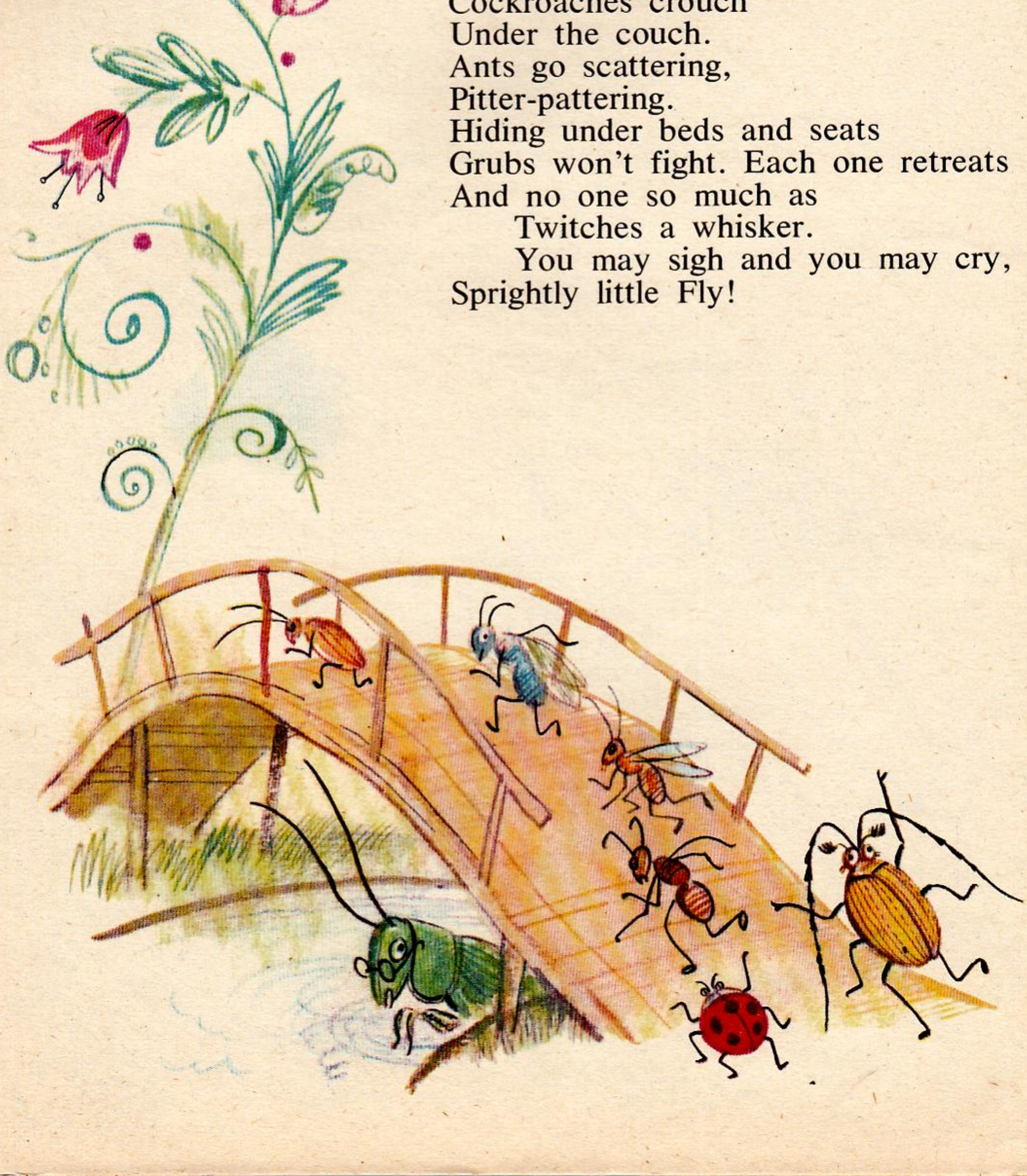
Suddenly a Spider ran,
Spider-Man,
Caught our Fly with nets he span,
— Spiders can—
In a twinkle of an eye
He could kill our little Fly!

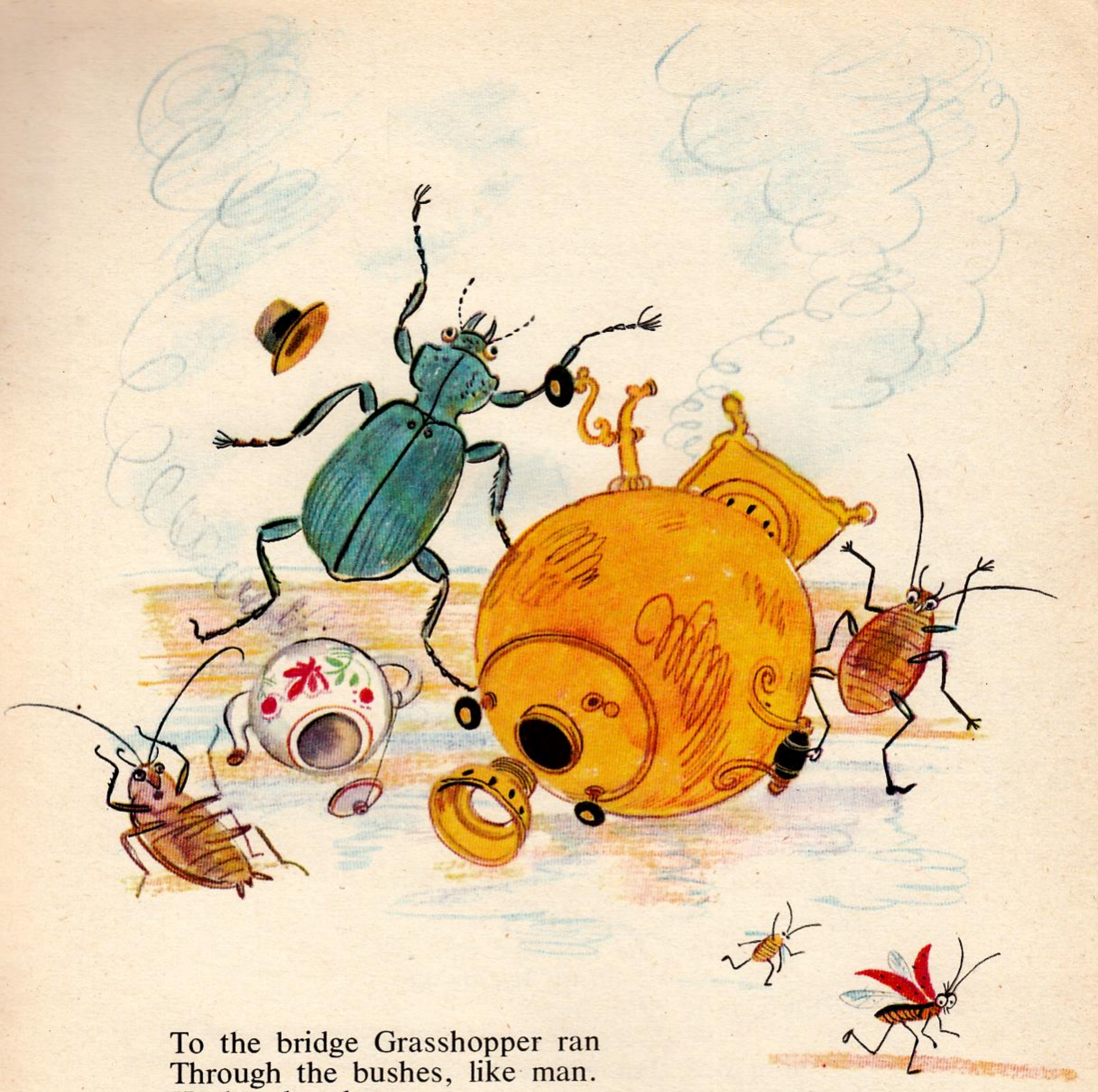
"Oh my darlings! I'm in danger!
Stop, this Spider, kill this stranger!

You had helpings of tea,
Now you ought to help me.
Oh, dear friends, I fear
That my end is near!"

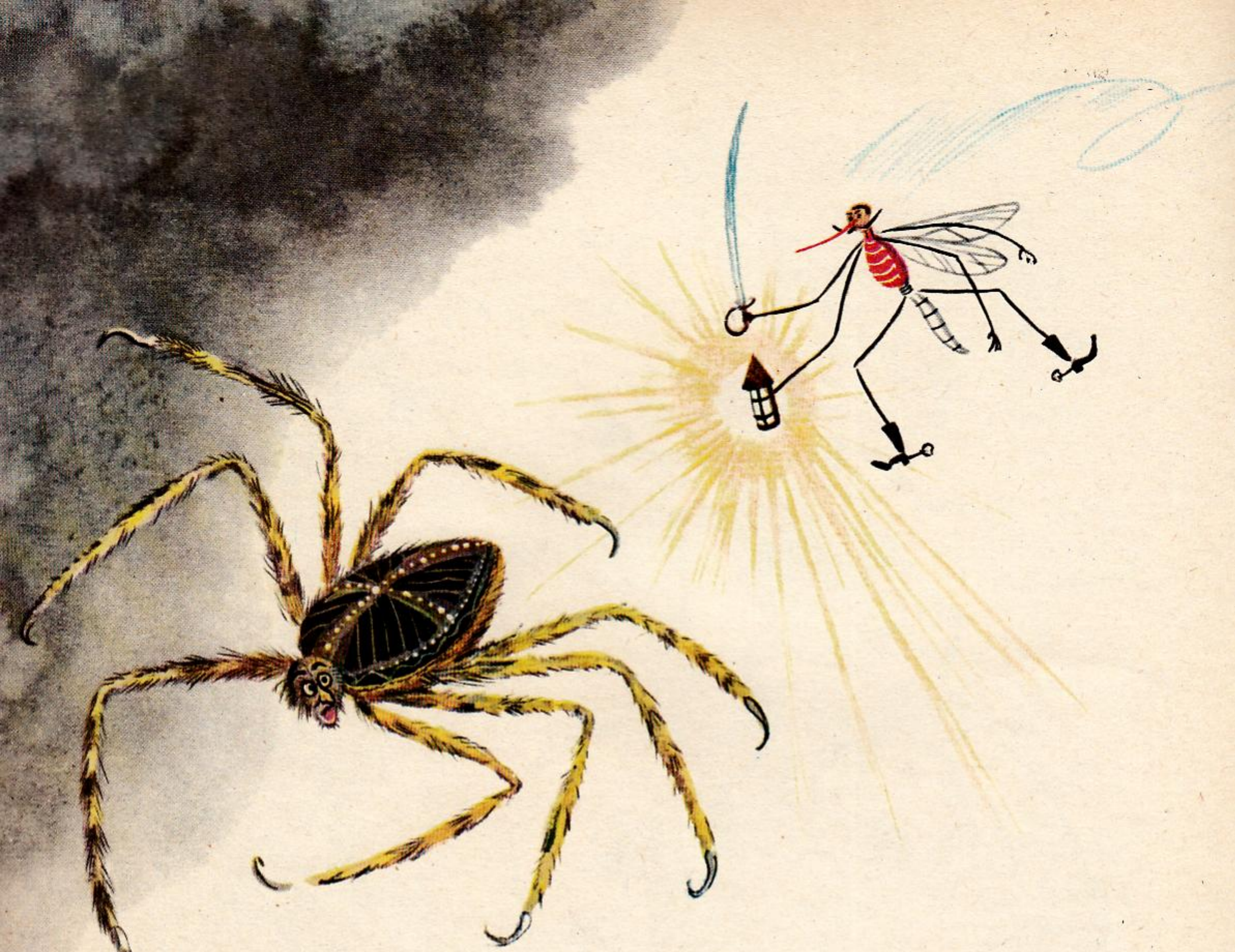
What poor Beetles saw
Made them faint with fear.
Into cracks, under mats
They all disappear...

Cockroaches crouch
Under the couch.
Ants go scattering,
Pitter-pattering.
Hiding under beds and seats
Grubs won't fight. Each one retreats
And no one so much as
Twitches a whisker.
You may sigh and you may cry,
Sprightly little Fly!





To the bridge Grasshopper ran
Through the bushes, like man.
He hop-hop-hops.
Up he pops,
Never stops
Till he flops!



What a horrible Spider!
Hand and foot he has tied her.
Now, sitting beside her,
In Fly's poor little heart
Sharp fangs he is sinking.
Her lifeblood that villian is drinking.
Let her scream, she is caught.
None pay heed to her plight.
And the Spider says naught.
He is filled with delight.

Suddenly, down from the skies,
Small and smart, Mosquito dives.

In his hands that gallant mite
Has a light. He's full of fight.

"Where's the killer? Cruel beast.
I don't fear him in the least!"

At the pest he dashes.
With his sword he slashes...
Off he cuts the monster's head.
He has struck the Spider dead!
To the window he leads the Fly
By the hand, and she sees the sky.

"I, Mosquito, set you free,
Spider-Beast was killed by me.
You're the darling of my life,
So, sweet maiden, be my wife."

From under beds and seats crawl out
Grubs and beetles. How they shout!
"What a deed Mosquito's done!
Glory, glory! He has won!"

Soon the fire-flies draw in sight,
Every one puts on his light,
Bright and merrily they shine,
Everything is fine!

Hurry, Centipede!
Down the path make speed.
Tell musicians, one and all,
They are welcome to our ball.

Soon musicians fill the room.
Drums make all the insects prance,
Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom!
Fly and bridegroom lead the dance.

Then in highboots, tap-tap,
Maybug marches, rap-rap!

Ladybug and Grubs approach
Natty Gnats and Cock-the-Roach.
Beetles with big horns that twitch,
Fit as farmers, rough but rich,
Wave their hats. Then in a ring,
Holding Butterflies, they swing.

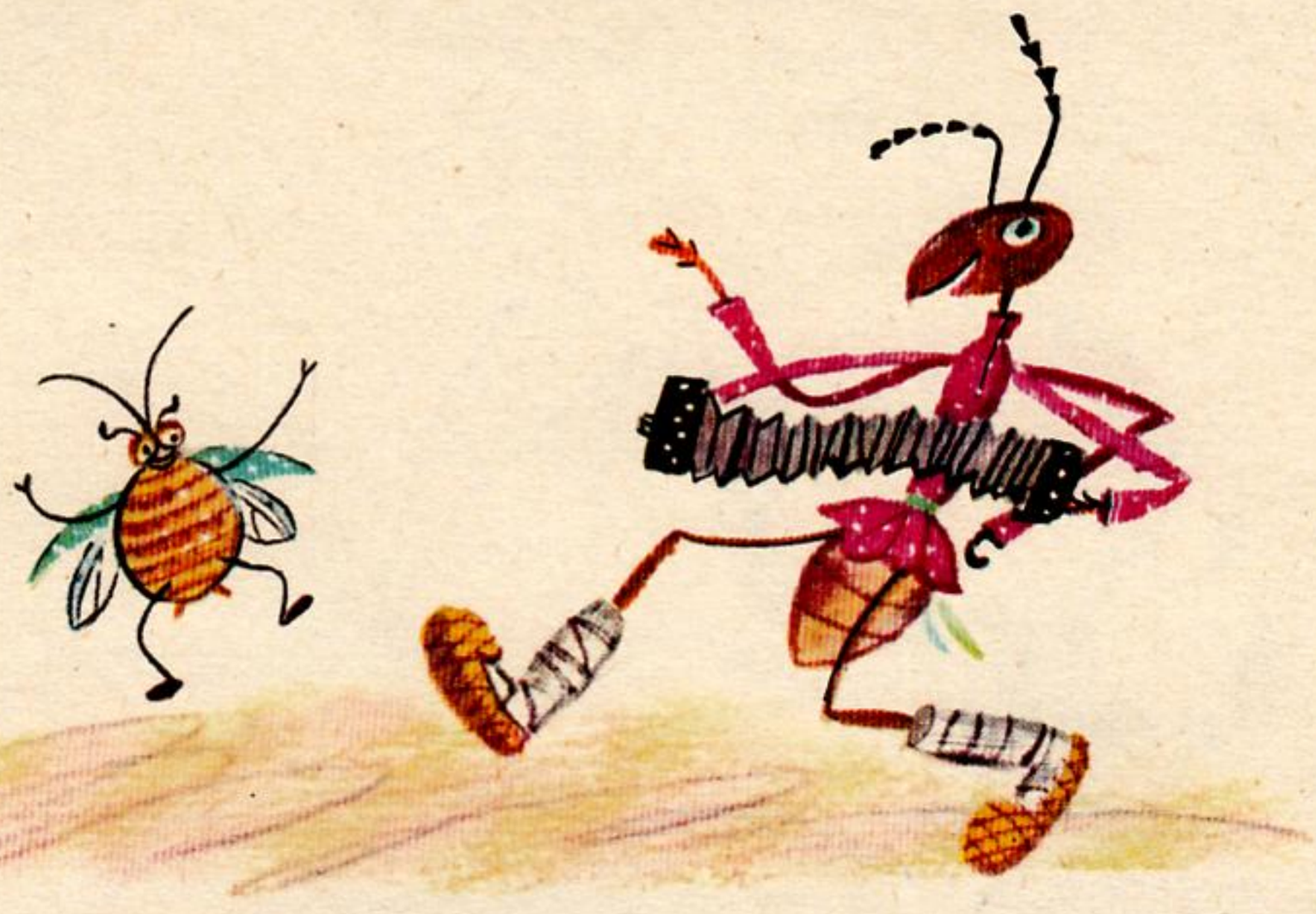
Tara-ra, tara-ra!
Swarms of Midges sing "Hurrah!"

Little people rejoice—
Fly has made her choice.
And the young, the brave Mosquito
Is the one that she will wed.
Ant is busy dancing reels,
Kicking dust up with his heels.

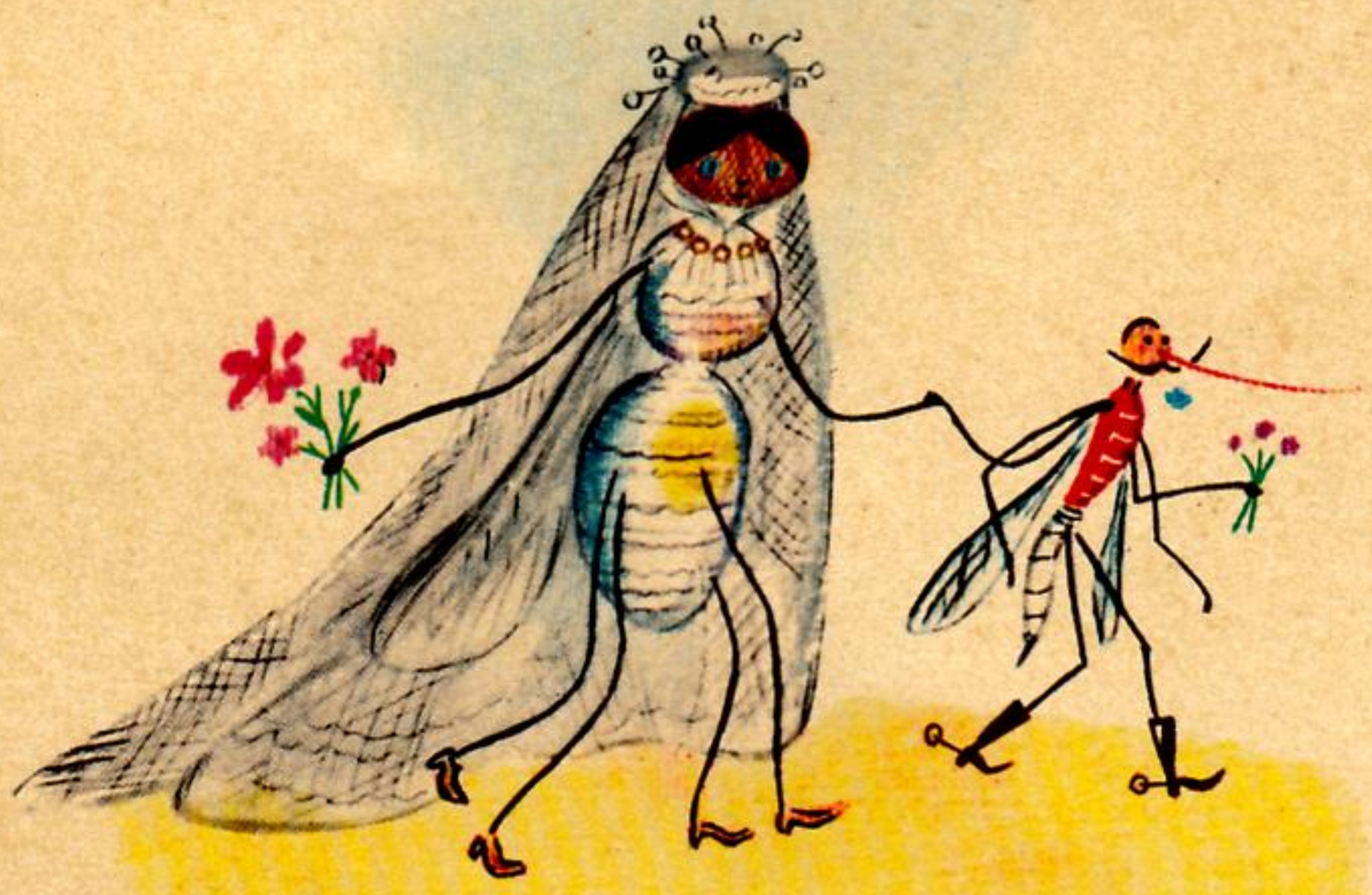
He and Aunty Anty step out high.
Ant at little insects winks an eye,
"Mites, how nice you are!
I spy there on far
Cucaracha, cha-cha-cha,
Cucaracha-cha!"

Highboots squeak and slap.
Toes and heels tap.

Swarms of Midges sway and swing.
Till the break of day they'll sing...
Little Fly so spruce and sprightly,
This is your great day!



Drawings by O. Zotov



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